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Leath, Roland (Education & Music Minister)

Music Ministers, Organists, and Education  
Ministers of First Baptist, Shelby

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11-19-1965

### Newspaper - The Cleveland Times - Nov. 19, 1965 - Roland Leath

Unknown

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# THE CLEVELAND TIMES

"Your Home Paper" . . . A Part of The Life of Cleveland County . . . "Your Home Paper"

VOL. 25, NO. 50

Second Class Mail Privileges Authorized at Shelby, N. C.

SHELBY, N. C., FRIDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 19, 1965

Published Semi-Weekly

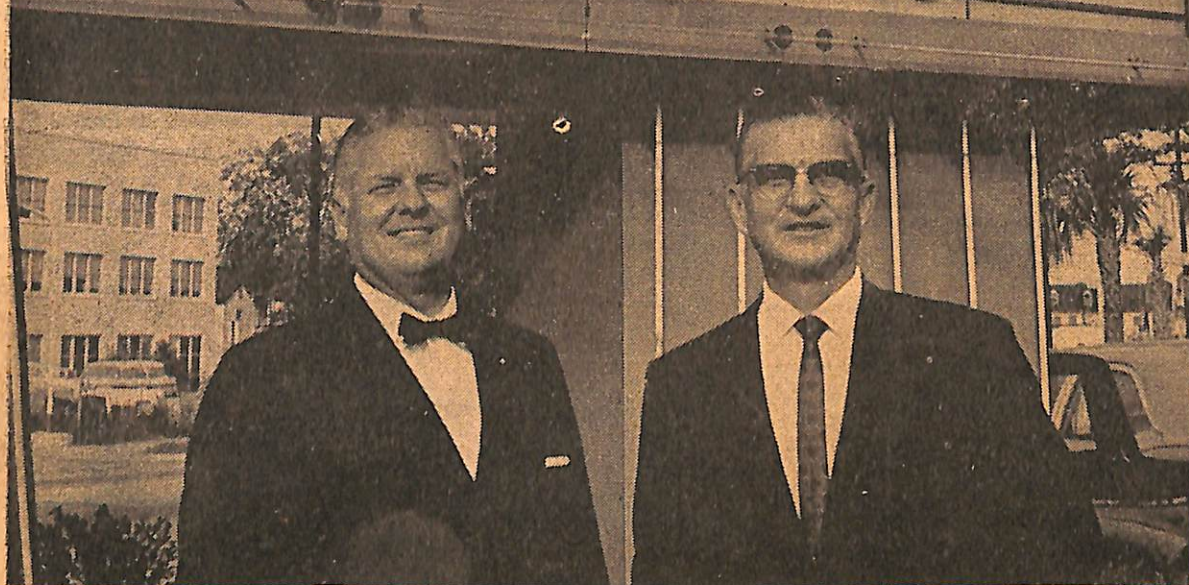
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# WELCOME UL & ROLAND LEATH ANGELIST MUSIC



**A BLAZING WELCOME** — The Rev. Roland Leath of Shelby, right, and his brother, Dr. Paul Brooks Leath of Fresno, Calif., were given a surprise welcome by the Holiday Inn in Charleston, S. C. when they found their names in giant let-

ters on the marquee. The brother team has just concluded a revival at Citadel Square Baptist Church in Charleston with Dr. Leath as the evangelist and Shelby's Roland Leath in charge of special music.

## First Time In 14 Years

# Leath Brothers Combine Talents, Church Mission As Revival Team

Last week a revival at Citadel Square Baptist Church in Charleston, S. C. brought an extraordinary brother team together on a Baptist church rostrum for the first time in 14 years.

Roland Leath of Shelby and his younger brother, Dr. Paul Brooks Leath of Fresno, Calif., combined talents in carrying out the Lord's work as an unusual team—Dr. Leath as evangelist and Roland Leath as director of special revival music and soloist.

Until Nov. 7 in Charleston they had not been together in their church mission since 1951.

In that year the Rev. Harlan Harris brought Dr. Leath for revival services to Shelby's First Baptist where Roland Leath has been director of church education and music since 1949. Later in 1951 the brothers combined talents at Broadway Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tenn. Since

and would conclude the musical interlude with both playing the same piano.

Musical training for the gifted brothers began with their mother, Mrs. Polly Leath of 510 W. Graham St., when they were boys in Fort Worth, Texas. Mrs. Leath began taking piano lessons when her son, Roland was eight. She would teach him what she had absorbed at each lesson and when Paul Brooks was old enough also instructed him at the keyboard.

"Mama was our first teacher for several years," the Shelbians tells.

Mrs. Leath and Roland Leath's wife, Lois, joined the brothers at their revival in Charleston last weekend.

## **EXTROVERT**

"My brother is very outgoing, very energetic, a first class ex-

trovert," says Roland Leath. "He loves people and if I do say so, he's a wonderful preacher."

"And after years apart we both think pretty much the same," mused the Shelbians, indicating that the brothers are in harmony in other phases of life and outlook just as they are at the piano.

As youngsters growing up in Texas, it was Roland Leath who first felt the call to the Lord's work. At 15 he had already decided to devote his life to the church and, because of skipping a grade in school, he had graduated from high school and was a member of an evangelistic team. At 16 Roland enrolled in Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kansas. Then he returned to his hometown, Fort Worth, and attended North Texas A. and M. College, a branch of Texas A.

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been director of church education and music since 1949. Later in 1951 the brothers combined talents at Broadway Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tenn. Since that date the distance to California has literally kept them from joining hands in their individual roles in church work.

"We don't get together often except when some preacher knows us and calls us to a revival at the same time," says Leath with a smile, adding that Citadel Square's pastor, Dr. J. C. Murphy, was a seminary classmate of Paul Brooks Leath.

"While Paul and I were both in Texas we conducted a number of revivals together, but, now, naturally, it has to be a relatively big church to bring him from California. That's the one big reason we haven't been together lately."

## SERVICES

For the week of November 7 through 14 in Charleston, with two services daily, the first each day was a noon gathering in the church basement. A simple luncheon was served at a nominal cost, describes Leath, with the service conducted while the people still sat at the table after the meal.

"Paul and I would play the piano together and sing a hymn," tells Leath, who says that his brother sings, although he is not a trained vocalist. "Then I would sing a solo, and direct the congregation in a hymn with Paul bringing the message."

The musically talented brother team began each night at 7:15 p.m. in the sanctuary with music prior to the service which began at 7:30 p.m. with Dr. Leath as evangelist. Roland Leath would play piano music for about five minutes, then both brothers would play several duets on two pianos



## Leath

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and M., receiving his A. B. degree there.

While a college student, the Shelbian studied voice at the Fort Worth Conservatory of Music. "I didn't continue formal study of piano but I did keep up by practicing. But in recent years I've let that go," he said with a sweep of the hands.

Deciding on music and education as his field in Christian endeavor, Leath first was music and education director at First Baptist Church in Temple, Texas then returned to his home church, Travis Avenue Baptist Church, in Fort Worth for five years.

From there it was a move to Paris, Texas First Baptist Church then to First Baptist in Little

Rock, Arkansas for six years prior to coming to Shelby in 1949.

### MINISTRY

Paul Brooks' commitment to the church as his life's work came just a little later than Roland's. As a young high school graduate, at 19 he began work in the First National Bank of Fort Worth for two years. It was then that he made his decision for the ministry.

Asked if he might have influenced his younger brother's decision for the ministry, Roland Leath smiled broadly and said, "I just might have."

Dr. Leath received his A. B. degree from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, his Th. M. Degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth and his Ph. D. degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

His pastorates prior to his call to Fresno included First Baptist Churches in Thomasville, Ga. and Vivian, La. and then a number of years at First Baptist Church in Brownwood, Texas.

While in Brownwood the energetic Dr. Leath had in his congregation five laymen very interested in Christian work, according to Roland. Dr. Leath contacted some of the Southern Baptist churches in California and asked pastors if they would invite the laymen for weekend revivals since in the 1940s there were few Southern Baptist churches in the Pacific coast state.

Six churches responded to the inquiries, with Dr. Leath accompanying the laymen to California. "Out there, Paul Brooks saw that there was a wide-open field as far as Southern Baptists were concerned. When a church extended a call, he immediately accepted," tells his brother Dr. Leath has been pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Fresno for 10 years.

### SOUTHERN BAPTISTS

"Southern Baptists are numerically the largest group of Baptists in the nation," explains Roland Leath. "Southern Baptists now have churches and strong state conventions in all 50 states. That is why Paul Brooks' church in California is called First Southern Baptist Church."

Other Baptists in the United States are in the American Baptist group, with Leath explaining that some of the strongest Baptist churches in the western, midwestern and northern states bear the name Southern Baptist.

Roland Leath regrets that 3,000 miles separate the two families and they cannot get together as often as they would like to share fellowship.

Dr. Leath's first wife died in 1961 leaving him with four young daughters. In December 1964 he married Mrs. Maritia Alcorn of Brownwood, Texas who had two children, a son and a daughter—with the family group then swelled to six children.

Dr. Leath's children are Ann, 20, a third year student at Baylor University, Louise, 17, Brooks,

16 and Joelle, 12. Hope Alcorn is 15 and Stanley Alcorn is 11.

"Paul Brooks' church had to build another bedroom and bath on the parsonage after he married in order to make room for his big family," laughs Roland with brotherly pride. "They already had four bedrooms and two baths but that was not enough to go around."

And the Shelby branch of the Leath family is blessed with both children and grandchildren. One daughter, Mrs. W. E. Hamner, lives in New Orleans and the other daughter, Mrs. Joe Hood, lives in Independence, Missouri where her husband is a student at Midwestern Theological Seminary. Each daughter has a baby daughter, with the Roland Leaths now doting grandparents.

Their son, Marcus, is a student at Duke University.

With a family so inclined and oriented to the Christian life both as a personal faith and vocation, does young Marcus have the ministry in mind for the future? "No, not at this point, I think. In fact, right at this juncture, he doesn't actually know what he intends to do after college," says his father.

Reunion of the two brothers on the Charleston church rostrum after 14 years leaves many happy memories for Roland Leath. The brother team today is a distinguished looking pair, both graying at the temples.

But Roland Leath still smiles and says, "I'm proud of my little brother."